

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 346
Submitted by: Jacinta Carolan
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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: Concerns over Proposed Education Legislation Amendments in QLD
Date: Sunday, 17 March 2024 5:08:57 PM

Committee Secretary
Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed changes to the education legislation in Queensland that have recently been presented to parliament. I have previously lived in Queensland and am considering returning to the state in the future, but am also aware any changes may have ramifications interstate. I am a home educating mother of two children – now 15 and 12, and am deeply worried about the affect these changes could have on my own family and the home educating community. I believe it is very important to add my voice to this discussion about the potential changes and the negative impact they will have as I believe home education has been a wonderful, positive and incredibly successful choice for ourselves and so many others. My husband and I chose to home educate when the children were much younger due to work commitments taking my husband away regularly and us all wanting to still be together as a family. During our time home educating we have been able to create individualised education programs, drawing on many aspects of the curriculum, but not requiring to adhere to it fully, as life has offered many other opportunities for learning. We have been able to follow the children's interests in various topics and learning areas, which have meant they have developed a love of learning and absolutely have received a high-quality education.

My first issue is with the amendments trying to create a situation where home educating parents are forced to try and prove that home education is in their child's best interests. I am confused as to why this is required when no one in the school system needs to prove that school is in their child's best interest. No other parent group needs to report to the government on what research they have done into the school they have chosen, or why that particular child should be learning those particular subjects. Home education is a pathway that is often chosen as a last resort, not because it is easy but because the other choices have not worked. The journey into home education is complex and often not a neat situation to fit in a form. Just as with all other educational choices, what pathways families select for education of their children should not need to be proved to a government representative.

My second objection is regarding the focus on a high-quality education requiring the use and reporting around the Australian National Curriculum. My family, and all other home educators I know, are constantly researching and improving our home education practices and have an enormous amount of resources to choose from, which would all be

overshadowed by requiring home educators to use the Australian Curriculum. I believe the Australian Curriculum is a complex document, aimed at being shared and understood across entire staffs in the school system, even with the help of specialists, and is not for individuals to try and read and apply at home. I believe the Australian Curriculum proposes a careful step by step method of learning, with scaffolding for classroom settings, that are not as necessary in the home education one on one learning situation. I believe the Australian Curriculum uses metalanguage across subjects to streamline and unify the learning in schools that is taught to educators in university, but is not always easy to understand, can be very prohibitive and indeed is not always necessary to know in order to teach many different areas.

Mandating use of the Curriculum and requiring reporting around this will slow down many students progress and create a situation where the parent/educator is spending more time trawling through paper work rather than facilitating learning, offering specialised opportunities and being able to follow the child's particular needs and interests. So many parents have taken the path of home education due to the mainstream system not being a good fit for their children. People have chosen to take over the learning of their children with the hopes of encouraging them, finding various pathways to success and assisting with any learning challenges. Educating many children takes novel and surprising methods, and what applies to one child may not work with the next. This takes time and effort and a great deal of patience (as all teaching requires) but it does not need a mandated curriculum to be successful. Education by definition is "the act and process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the power of reasoning and judgement, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life." The Australian Curriculum may be the framework from which schools base their style of education, however there should be no need for every person in the state to require the exact same set of guidelines to achieve an education. Some of the most amazing learning my children have done would have been lost had we been required to focus on the curriculum or reporting across all subject areas.

Thirdly, I am deeply worried about your proposal to decrease the room for families to be able to unenroll children when required, particularly when there is traumas or challenges that are being dealt with. The time and effort required for parents to resolve situations and then produce the required reports to begin homeschooling can be so much more successful without the pressure on children remaining in untenable circumstances. Punishing a child for not being able to continue in school through marking them as truant, or forcing to remain in the school, while their family are trying to make alternative arrangements seems counter productive to a child's best interests - which should be what is the focus of any education amendments. The provisional registration allows room for thought and planning, research and advice, that can be the difference between a happy and healthy child and a child with lifelong trauma, possibly depression and disinterest in learning.

I strongly encourage you to reconsider these proposed changes that will drastically diminish the abilities of families to adapt to their circumstances and their children's individual needs. I highly recommend hearing from a broad range of voices from the home

education community, both alumni and present, to see if there may be a better way forward for all children. With further in depth consultation, with a variety of relevant home educators, I believe you will find there is room for many styles and types of education in our society, especially for those who already struggle to fit in to the main stream system.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and consider my concerns. I hope with further discussion a better solution can be found.

Kind regards,

Jacinta Carolan

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted contact information]

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